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FM (b)(3):10 USC 424
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THIS IS AN INFOR REORT, NOT FINISHED INTELLIGENCE

1. COUNTRY: ARGENTINA (AR)
2. REPORT NUMBER: (b)(3):10 USC 424
3. TITLE: MILITARY LEADERSHIP CRISIS
4. PROJECT NUMBER: N/A
5. DATE OF INFORMATION: 790929
6. DATE OF REPORT: 790929
7. DATE AND PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 790929, BUENOS AIRES
8. REFERENCES: (b)(3):10 USC 424
9. ASSESSMENT:

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10. ORIGINATOR: (b)(3):10 USC 424

11. REQUEST EVALUATION: OMIT

12. PREPARING OFFICER: (b)(3):10 USC 424

13. APPROVING AUTHORITY: (b)(3):10 USC 424

14. SOURCE: A. MEDIA- LA NACION 790929 B. RADIO C. (b)(3):10 USC 424

~~15. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: DIRC-NO NOFORN TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO HOST GOVERNMENT~~

16. (U) SUMMARY: THIS REPORT FORWARDS INFORMATION THAT THE III CORPS COMMANDER AND DEPUTY III CORPS COMMANDER HAVE BEEN RELIEVED OF DUTY BY THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY. THE III CORPS COMMANDER MAJ. GEN LUCIANO BENJAMIN MENENDEZ, HAS BEEN REPLACED BY MAJ. GEN. JOSE VAQUERO, WHO PREVIOUSLY WAS COMMANDER OF V ARMY CORPS. IN A PRE-DAWN TELEGRAM, MENENDEZ ASKED FOR COMMANDER IN CHIEF VIOLA'S RETIREMENT, FOR HAVING ALLEGEDLY FAILED TO PROPERLY CARRY OUT HIS DUTY AS CINC OF THE ARMY. MENENDEZ' ACTION RESULTED IN HIS SUBSEQUENT RELIEF OF COMMAND BY VIOLA.

22. (U) 1. IN CORDOBA, AT 4:00 AM LOCAL TIME, ACCORDING TO SOURCE A, GEN MENENDEZ CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THAT AT 3:00 AM HE HAD CABLED A REQUEST FOR VIOLA TO RESIGN, AT 3:45, NOT HAVING RECEIVED A RESPONSE, MENENDEZ ADDRESSED THE PRESS CORPS TO ANNOUNCE THE TEXT OF THE TELEGRAM TO VIOLA:
1. IN VIEW OF THE THE FACT THAT THE IDEA OF THE ARMY HAS BEEN PUT ASIDE IN FAVOR OF PERSONAL PREFERENCES NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE PROER INSTITUTIONALIZATION THAT IS THE BASIS OF THIS PROCESS. 2. BECAUSE THE DUTY OF ERRADICATING SUB-VERSION HAS NOT BEEN FULFILLED, CLOSING THE DOORS SO MARXISM WILL NOT RECUR IN THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE. ON THE CONTRARY, WE HAVE FALLEN INTO INADMISSIBLE ACQUIESENCE.
3. THIS PROCEDURE IS NOT IN KEEING WITH THE REASONS WHICH GAVE OUR MEN OF THE ARMED FORCES THE IMPULSE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES AND TO PUT THE NATION BACK ONTO THE RIGHT PATH-SOMETHING WHICH MADE ALL THE CITIZENS APPLAUD THE PRCESS STARTED ON 24 MARCH 1976. WE ARE NOW CREATING CONFUSION, DISCOURAGEMENT AND LOSS OF CONFIDENCE AMONG THE PEOPLE WHO GAVE US THEIR ENDORSEMENT TO ACT WITH ENERGY AND FIRMNESS.

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4. ALL THESE POINTS ARE THE EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF, AND IT IS MY UNAVOIDABLE DUTY AS III CORPS COMMANDER TO DEMAND THAT THIS SITUATION BE BROUGHT TO AN END WITH IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF LT GEN VIOLA FROM HIS POST. OTHERWISE, LT GEN VIOLA WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE.
2. SUBSEQUENTLY, AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, EMANATING FROM ARMY HEADQUARTERS AND BROADCAST BY TELAM, WAS ISSUED:
"THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT BY RESOLUTION OF THE ARMY COMMANDER IN CHIEF, III CORPS COMMANDER MAJ GEN LUCIANO MENENDEZ AND DEPUTY COMMANDER BRIG GEN JORGE MARADONA HAVE BEEN RELIEVED OF THEIR DUTIES. THIS MEASURE IS BASED ON THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE COHESION OF THE ARMED FORCES. ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS ISSUE WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE ARMY CINS."
3. ACCORDING TO SOURCE B, MAJ GEN JOSE ANTONIO VQUERO, PREVIOUS COMMANDER OF V ARMY CORPS, HAS REPLACED GEN MENENDEZ AS III CORPS COMMANDER. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, HE IS TO TAKE UP HIS DUTIES IMMEDIATELY. ACCORDING TO SAME SOURCE, THE IV AIRBORNE BRIGADE, LOCATED IN CORDOBA, (COMMANDED BY BRIG GEN LOUIS MARTELLA) HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER DIRECT COMMAND OF THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS IN BUENOS AIRES. SOURCE ALSO INDICATED THATTHE 8TH MOUNTAIN BRIGADE, (COMMANDED BY MARIO LEPORI), AND THE 5TH MOUNTAIN BRIGADE, (COMMANDER BY MIGUEL ANGEL PODESTA), HAV INDICATED THAT THEY WILL COMPLY WITH THE CINC'S DECISION. ALL OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED UNITS ARE III ARMY CROPS UNITS.
4. A CELEBRATION IN CONNECTION WITH INFANTRY DAY WAS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE TODAY, 790929; ACCORDING TO RADIO REPORTS, THE CEREMONY IS TO CONTINUE AS SCHEDULED, AS PRES VIDELA IS TO BE PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY.

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CMMMENT: ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ AT PRESENT, THE SITUATION WITHIN THE CAPITAL SEEMS CALM. HOURLY NEWS BROADCASTS ARE DESCRIBING EVENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE. AN INFANTRY DAY CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT CAMPO DE MAYO IS GOING AHEAD AS SCHEDULED WITH PRES. VIDELA IN ATTENDANCE. IT IS NOT YET KNOWN WHETHER OR NOT GEN VIOLA WILL ATTEND THE CEREMONY. FURTHER, WE SENSE THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF TODAY'S EVENTS IS BEING DELIBERATELY DOWNPLAYED BY THE GOV.
B. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ALL OF THE BRIGADE COMMANDERS MENENDEZ WERE REPORTEDLY HAND PICKED BY VIOLA BECAUSE OF THEIR LOYALTY. AT PRESENT, THIS WOULD PRECLUDE MENENDEZ FROM CLAIMING THAT HE HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE SENIOR OFFICER UNDER HIS FORMER COMMAND.
C. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ VAQUERO IS ALOYAL VIOLA SUPPORTER

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AND PLACE HIM IN COMMAND OF III CORPS WOULD FURTHER ENHANCE VIOLA'S POWER BASE WITHIN III CORPS. LATE WORD HAS BEEN RECEIVED THAT NO SPECIAL SECURITY MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN, AND ALL ARMY UNITS ARE DEMONSTRATING CALM. LA PAMPA, THE EAT OF A CAVALRY UNIT, REPORTS THE SITUATION AS NORMAL. SALTA, WHICH IS THE SEAT OF ANOTHER CAVALRY UNIT, REPORTS THE SITUATION AS NORMAL. TUCUMAN, WHICH IS THE SEAT OF A III CORPS INFANTRY BRIGADE, REPORTS THAT INFANTRY DAY CEREMONIES ARE TAKING PLACE AS SCHEDULED.

D. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ THE EVENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITHIN THE LAST WEEK-TIMERMAN'S RELEASE, TALK OF FORMER PRES CAMPORA'S POSSIBLE RELEASE, ALONG WITH THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON A MEMBER OF THE ECONOMY MINISTRY-HAVE CREATED DISUNITY AMONG THE ARMY HIERARCHY. MENENDEZ' ACTIONS ARE APPARENTLY A CULMINATION OF HIS FEELINGS OF DISCONTENT TOWARDS VIOLA'S HANDLING OF THESE RECENT EVENTS. SUAREZ MASON'S POSITION ON THESE MATTER IS UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME.

AMEMBASSY COORDINATED. ~~DECL/REVW 29 SEP 85~~

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